



Department of Justice

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2007
WWW.USDOJ.GOV/USAO/TXE

ENRD
(202) 514-2007
TDD (202) 514-1888

ROWAN COMPANIES SENTENCED FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CRIMES IN CONNECTION WITH OIL AND GAS DRILLING OPERATIONS

WASHINGTON – Rowan Companies, Inc., (Rowan) a major oil and gas drilling company, was sentenced today to three years probation in U.S. District Court in Beaumont, Texas, in connection with the routine discharge of pollutants and garbage into the Gulf of Mexico from one of the firm's oil rigs, the Midland, the Justice Department announced.

Rowan will pay a \$7 million dollar criminal fine, along with a \$1 million community service payment to the Southern Environmental Enforcement Network (SEEN) for the purpose of environmental training, education, and enforcement coordination concerning violations of the Clean Water Act (CWA.) Rowan also provided a community service payment of \$1 million to the National Marine Sanctuaries Foundation to be used for preservation and protection projects at the Flower Garden and Stetson Banks National Marine Sanctuary located in the Gulf of Mexico off the coasts of Texas and Louisiana.

In addition, as a term of probation, Rowan will reorganize its corporate structure to add an environmental division and to implement a comprehensive environmental compliance plan under which the company will commit that all of its rigs operating in U.S. waters will comply with U.S. and international environmental laws. In cooperation with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Coast Guard, Rowan will develop new sandblasting techniques and help establish new industry standards for the minimization and containment of sandblasting debris over water.

Rowan pleaded guilty to the charges on October 9, 2007 in Beaumont.

According to the facts presented in Court, the operation and cleaning of offshore drilling rigs created substantial amounts of waste. For example, the hydraulic cranes on board the Rig Midland required the use of large amounts of fresh hydraulic oil, and routine maintenance and operation of the rig necessitated the use of chemicals, paint, and other materials.

The government's investigation revealed that between 2002 and 2004, employees on the Rig Midland routinely discharged waste hydraulic oil mixed with water, used paint, paint cans, and other pollutants and garbage into the Gulf of Mexico and failed to notify the government of the discharges in violation of the CWA and the Act to Prevent Pollution from Ships (APPS). The charges associated with these violations were filed in the Eastern District of Texas. In the Eastern District of Louisiana, Rowan pleaded guilty to one CWA felony count for discharging pollutants into the Sabine River as a result of sand blasting operations used to clean the rig in Port Fourchon in 2004.

The case was investigated by the Environmental Protection Agency's Criminal Investigation Division and the Coast Guard Criminal Investigative Service. It was prosecuted by the Justice Department's Environmental Crimes Section and the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern Districts of

Texas and Louisiana.

###

[back to top](#)

Back